

REMARKS

I. Status of Claims

Upon entry of the Amendment, which is respectfully requested, claims 1, 2, 4, 6-12, 14, 16-24, 26 and 28-32 will be pending in the present application.

Claims 1, 11 and 21 are amended to recite that the strong electrolyte is selected from the group consisting of NaCl, KCl, NaNO₃, NH₄NO₃, Na₂SO₄, K₂SO₄, (NH₄)₂SO₄, NaHCO₃ and KHCO₃. Support for the above limitation can be found, for example, at page 11, lines 5-7 of the present specification.

No new matter is added.

Entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested.

II. Response to Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-12, 14, 16-24, 26 and 28-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner asserts that the term “strong electrolyte” in claims 1, 11 and 21 is a relative term that renders the claim indefinite. Claims 2, 4, 6-10, 12, 14, 16-20, 22-24 and 28-32 are included in the rejection based on their dependence from claims 1, 11 and 21.

Amended claims 1, 11 and 21 recite, in part, that the strong electrolyte is selected from the group consisting of NaCl, KCl, NaNO₃, NH₄NO₃, Na₂SO₄, K₂SO₄, (NH₄)₂SO₄, NaHCO₃ and KHCO₃. Therefore, the term “strong electrolyte” is clearly defined in the claim language.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 112 rejection of claims 1, 11 and 21. Claims 2, 4, 6-10, 12, 14, 16-20, 22-24, 26 and 28-32

also satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, at least by virtue of their dependence from claims 1, 11 and 21.

III. Response to Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103

Claims 1, 2, 4, 10, 11, 12, 14, 20-24, 26 and 32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Prakash et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,444,343 B1).

Claims 7-9, 17-19 and 29-31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Prakash.

Amended claims 1, 11 and 21 incorporate the recitation that the strong electrolyte is selected from the group consisting of NaCl, KCl, NaNO₃, NH₄NO₃, Na₂SO₄, K₂SO₄, (NH₄)₂SO₄, NaHCO₃ and KHCO₃. In contrast, Prakash only discloses a surfactant which may be an ammonium salt of an aliphatic monocarboxylic acid.

In view of the above, Prakash does not teach each and every element of amended claim 1, 11 and 21, and the claims are therefore, patentable. Claims 2, 4, 6-10, 12, 14, 16-20, 22-24, 26 and 28-32 are patentable, at least by virtue of their dependence from claims 1, 11 and 21.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the §§ 102 and 103 rejections are therefore, respectfully requested.

Conclusion

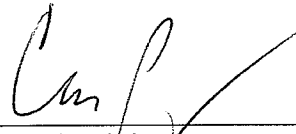
In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Appln. No.: 10/519,550

Attorney Docket No.: Q85348

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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Date: March 10, 2009